Untitled Salem Project

Written by

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1 **INT. HOUSEHOLD - DAY** 1

SUPER: **WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT, 1666**

A stern looking woman -- GOODWIFE SMYTHE, forty to fifty, sharp features -- looks down at a copy of THE BIBLE on a small wooden table. She then raises her eyes with a look of disdain. Across the room a young girl -- ELEANOR YOUNG YOUNG, thirteen, brown hair -- sits in a chair. She looks dead ahead and shows no sign of emotion. Behind her another woman -- GOODWIFE NOBLE, forty to fitty, austere -- roughly combs the girls hair. She drags at it with clear malicious intent. Goodwife Smythe approaches, but Eleanor Young keeps her focus dead ahead.

GOODWIFE SMYTHE
Tell me, child, why have you cast aside the book of the Lord? You should not let it stray far from you at any time, let alone a day such a this. Hold it close to your heart, keep in clear in your mind and the path to salvation will open.

Not a flicker from Eleanor Young. Goodwife Noble continues to drag at her hair. Eleanor Young does not flinch

GOODWIFE SMYTHE (CONT'D)
We must stay on the path of righteousness and hold to the word of the Lord, especially in a land so wild and wicked as this. The godless idolaters must be washed clean of their sins and yielded in their creator's presence. Somebody must cleanse them of their vile, heathen ways. The Lord has sent us here, to this land, to do his work and spread joy and salvation. We must stay upright and true and hold to the teachings of the book!

GOODWIFE NOBLE
Indeed we must, Goodwife Smythe. From morning prayer to day's end, we must be virtuous and proper. We cannot fall into slovenly ways; we must be cleanly, whole and chaste. Your hair and these clothes, well, it is shameful! You must make more of yourself, girl. Do you hear me?

Eleanor Young does not respond. Her refusal to rise to the bait given her only serves to irritate the two women.

GOODWIFE SMYTHE
There is more to fear in this land than the dark-skinned demons who sully God's bountiful creation. There is a wickedness abroad that will prey on the soul of anyone who strays from the path of virtue. A rapacious evil that will drag us all down to the pit of eternal damnation if we do not stand true.

GOODWIFE NOBLE
Too true, Goodwife Smythe. To fall from the path of his grace starts with the smallest step. Wild and unkempt hair may seem a small thing, but...

Goodwife Noble again drags through Eleanor Young's hair, and the pulls at the shoulder of her clothing.

GOODWIFE SMYTHE
It does not speak well of a woman's morals to appear in public in a state of such distress. The journey to damnation starts with a single step. A loose hair to begin with, then looser morals. Then submission to wanton and carnal desires and the Devil himself! Be careful what path you tread now, girl, lest ye tread the same path that your own mother must now walk!

At that moment, the door swings open and a man -- JOHN YOUNG, forties, broad shouldered -- makes his way forward. He is in his finest clothes. The same he wears to church. His presence is commanding. Eleanor Young is clearly relieved to see her father. Her eyes dart from him to the two women and back again. Eleanor Young knows that her father caught the end of the conversation, she is looking to him to admonish the pair for their words about her mother. John Young's face is stern, but he holds his peace and acknowledges the two women.

JOHN YOUNG
Goodwife Smythe. Goodwife Noble. I thank you for your time. Now, I must ask you to leave me alone with my daughter.

Goodwife Smythe thinks about saying something, but the words die on her lips. She merely nods and signals to Goodwife Noble that it is time to leave.

Goodwife Noble looks back at Eleanor Young, who, in return, locks eyes with her and glares. The two women make their way outside.

JOHN YOUNG (CONT'D)
You would do best not to antagonise either of those two. You must hold your temper.

ELEANOR YOUNG
I held me temper well enough!

JOHN YOUNG
Sweet child, you held your tongue well enough. But even a look such as you gave them is too much. Given how things are.

ELEANOR YOUNG
Did you not hear what they said of mother? The wicked old sow Smythe. Her tongue is tainted with hatred and malice. She is driven by spite and desire for discord. And the crone, Noble, clawing at me like a rabid animal.

JOHN YOUNG
You be twice as careful of Goodwife Noble as you are of Smythe. You do well to heed me on that.

ELEANOR YOUNG
The things she said about mother. Not one of them true. Not one of them, father! Can't you do something? Why won't you act. You're stronger than any man here today.

John approaches Eleanor Young, kneels down in front of her and places her face in his broad, work worn hands.

JOHN YOUNG
You must be brave, Eleanor Young. Not only for your mother, not only for me, but for all of us.

Eleanor Young begins to get upset, tears well in her eyes.

ELEANOR YOUNG
It isn't fair, father. There is no justice in any of this. No mercy. No divinity in any of it.

It is visible that John agrees with his daughter, yet he does not say it aloud.

JOHN YOUNG
We must stay strong. You most of all.

ELEANOR YOUNG
They are fools, all of them! They are best left to their demise. Why should I...

JOHN YOUNG
(cutting her off)
I know, sweet child, I know. It is a painful day. You must be brave. We must both face what comes. I cannot be brave without you.

Eleanor Young looks surprised at her father and the emotion in his last words. The pair share a look. It is clear that John is deeply wounded to see his daughter in such distress, unable to prevent what comes next

ELEANOR YOUNG
I'm sorry, father.

JOHN YOUNG
I love your mother, you know that. It is my love for her, and for you, that stays my hand today. I would tear down all creation, or die in the attempt, if it were only my own soul at stake.

ELEANOR YOUNG
Father, I shouldn't have said what I did.

John manages a smile and nods at his daughter.

JOHN YOUNG
It is almost time.

ELEANOR YOUNG
I know.

John produces a small note from his pocket and hands it to Eleanor Young.

JOHN YOUNG
Here, it is for you.

ELEANOR YOUNG
For me? From who?

JOHN YOUNG
Your mother.

Eleanor Young is dumbstruck. She struggles to find words as she slowly plucks the note from her fathers hands.

ELEANOR YOUNG
But, how?

JOHN YOUNG
It does not matter. We have friends left yet. Not many, but still

ELEANOR YOUNG
Did you read it?

JOHN YOUNG
I did not. It is for you, and you alone. Your mother, you know, she will not speak today. No matter what is said.

ELEANOR YOUNG
Did she send a note for you?

JOHN YOUNG
(sighs)
No, my sweet. One note is more than enough cause for danger.

Eleanor Young looks sadly at her father, realising that the last chance for communication from her mother has passed. There will be no words of solace for John Young.

ELEANOR YOUNG
I am sorry, father. I. I. I.

John gets to his feet, and runs his hand across his daughters cheek.

JOHN YOUNG
I shall go stand by the door. You read that quick right now. Then keep it closer to you than anything else. There will be time to read it again later, I don't doubt. Closer than close, though.
(MORE)

JOHN YOUNG (CONT'D)
Knowledge of it would cause trouble for those who would help us. I'm sure Elsa has something important on her mind. She always has.

John laughs weakly at his last comment and heads towards the door. Eleanor Young unfolds the scrap of paper and begins to read.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.)
My darling Eleanor Young, the hour is almost at hand. This will be a hard day for you to bare. Yet there will be darker and harder days on the road ahead, so heed me now when I tell you this...

Eleanor Young puts the note in her clothing, stands and walks toward her father. They walk out into the sunlight and towards the gathered crowd.

2 **EXT. CHICAGO - MORNING** 2

SUPER: **CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 2023**

CONNIE PATTERSON, mid-thirties, brown shoulder length hair, glasses -- walks down the steps from an L TRAIN stop. The sound of morning traffic fills the air as she makes it to street level. She has a CELL PHONE pressed to her ear and a LARGE BAG slung across her shoulder, with some books protruding from it. She is dressed in a charcoal black dress and has black boots on. She converses with someone on the other end of the line as she walks

CONNIE
I don't know, Maria. I'm really tired. I barely slept again.

Connie stops at a crosswalk and looks up at the signal.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Yeah, the same dream. Hey, look, I know. Uh huh. I know. Yes, I know! I'll bring it up at therapy later, don't worry.

A woman standing beside Connie at the crosswalk shoots her a sideways glance. Connie smiles at her and lowers her tone. The light turns green to cross.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
It's a weeknight, though. I have a lot of work on. No, no, no. I do not always say no to going out. That's not true. I can still party. I just, you know, choose not to. I'm still fun. How could you say I'm not fun.

Connie looks in the window of clothing store and sees a sign for a sale. There are an array of dresses on display. She is drawn to a PURPLE DRESS matched with a pair of boots.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
The game of Jenga we had at my place last time was pretty epic. What? It still counts as fun. You enjoyed it, right? Anyway, I have better things to spend my money on than bar hopping on a Monday. We're not kids anymore.

Connie eyes up a the dress in the window.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I promise we'll go out soon. Yes, I mean it. Okay, sure. Yes. Okay, "mom". Yes, I'll mention the nightmare thing at therapy. I said yes, didn't I? Don't make me have to use your name in vain there, too. Okay, have a good day. Love ya. Bye.

Connie hangs up the PHONE and throws it in her bag. As she does she steps off a crosswalk and into a POTHOLE filled with water. It goes right up to her ankle. She steps back onto the path and inspects the aftermath.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Aww, you gotta be. Ffff.

She grabs the upper part of her sock in her hand and wrings out some dirty water. She looks back at the offending pothole.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Oh, eww. Gimme a break already.

Connie continues on her way to work and after a short distance she eyes a sign for BUCKLEY'S COFFEE SHOP further a block down. A slight smile traces across her lips. From a side street, a motorised scooter runs a red light and almost nails Connie.

She spins around and almost bundles the OLD LADY -- generic -- beside her to the ground. The pair tangle before Connie steadies both herself and the old lady.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, are you okay? That guy, he came out of nowhere. What an asshole. Did I hurt you?

OLD LADY
Oh, not at all. Don't you worry about it. We're all in one piece. Just about. Are you okay, my dear?

Connie is in a slight state of disarray. Her bag is askew and her hair is mussed. The old lady, on the other hand, seems spritely and unscathed. Connie flails to get herself realigned. She struggles with scrunchie in her hair.

CONNIE
Yes, I'm fine. As long as you're fine. You're fine, right?

OLD LADY
Quite alright. Take your time, my dear. You're quite the pretty thing. Fix your hair. A single hair out of place, well who knows where it could lead.

Connie gives the woman a bewildered look. She has almost gathered herself.

CONNIE
Yeah, sure. As long as you're okay. It could have been a way worse start to the day for both of us.

OLD LADY
As if one wet sock wasn't bad enough.

Connie gives a small laugh, then pulls a face. As she does, the old lady leans towards her.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
Still the odd hair out of place. Such a pretty thing you are, though.

The old lady stretches out a hand to Connie's head and the abruptly plucks a hair.

CONNIE
What the hell lady!?!

Connie puts her hand to her head and takes a step back. Her foot goes off the sidewalk. As it does a TRUCK loudly honks it's horn. Connie looks up and the driver gesticulates towards her. When she steps up onto the path again, the old lady is no longer there.

3 **EXT. VILLAGE, WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT, 1666** 3

Eleanor Young and her father walk into the sunlight. He puts a reassuring hand on her shoulder and nods at her solemnly. Eleanor Young takes a deep breath, and places the letter which she has in her palm inside her clothing.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.)
The words you hear today will be hard to endure, and the ending, harder still. I have already asked much of you, far too much of one so young. And yet, my sweet child, your path is only beginning, and much will be asked of you if we overcome the pitiless foe that threatens us all.

Eleanor Young and her father walk through the village. The yards and houses appear empty. A small boy peers out a window, as he catches a glimpse of Eleanor Young he ducks back down in fear.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Be kind and strong for your father. Though he is a goodly, strong and vital man, his outward fortitude masks an inward fragility. It is borne of love. The love he bears for me, but most of all, the love he bears for you, my darling child. Your father did not have to undertake any of this. His life, and his path in the world, would have been far less burdened had he abandoned us in our hour of need.

A STERN LOOKING VILLAGER --nondescript-- nods at John Young as the pair begin to make their way towards a clearing.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Today, you will hear me accused, chastised and rebuked by those we have known best, those we tilled the earth with, those we broke bread with, those we held as our friends. Your father will not call out, he will not object or protest. Do not confuse his silence with betrayal. He does this for you, my sweet Eleanor Young. Now that he can no longer protect me, it falls on him to protect that which is most precious to him in this world.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And, if there is to be a world left to live in, a world with any chance of grace, joy and light, then it is you must go onward.

A group of women are gathered and speaking in low tones. Goodwife Smythe and Goodwife Noble stare at Eleanor Young and her father, their look is one of derision and hatred.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Many of the people you see act only out of fear. Fear of what they do not understand, what they cannot comprehend. They are led by fear and ignorance. Some may think that they are the sheep sent out among the wolves. And yet they be harmless as doves, they do not have the wisdom of serpents. What comes after is a borne of a rage and fury. What they have awoken in the land, what the lands sends forth against those who dare tread it shores and call that place their own is ancient and malevolent. Those who are estranged from this land have set free what those who are kin to these shores have held at bay for so long.

REVEREND SMYTHE -- early 50s, greying hair, appropriate garb -- is reading from the bible to the gathered masses.

REV SMYTHE
Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Eleanor Young stares at him, impassively, as her father stands upright, with his head held high, at her side. A corvid takes flight from a nearby tree. Eleanor Young's eye is drawn to it as it shoots off towards the horizon. Beyond a clearing she can make out the form of in indigenous man. He looks saddened by what he sees.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.)
Now, my beloved child, it falls to you to undertake these labours. To shelter the people, all of the people, from a tempest that would engulf us all. A storm is raging, though many cannot see. They an in thrall to superstition and fear.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They call it "witchcraft", and today will be my last because of it. Yet, if they knew of what they should really fear, they would tremble and flee. The lord who they invoke daily, whose power they proclaim as a tool of salvation, in whose name they have condemned me, he has no power here. He holds no sway.

There is movement behind Reverend Smythe, a figure is moved forward, it is Elsa Young. She is lead onto a small gallows which is situated before the gathered villagers. She looks straight ahead. The Reverend turns to her and says something. Elsa gives no answer. She looks across at her husband and daughter for a second, then looks ahead into the distance.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You are the key, my love. Though I have taught you much, there is much left to learn. Be attentive to those around you, those who would cast you and your father down with me. I am sorry that there is no more time, my beautiful child.

Eleanor Young's breathing has become perceptibly faster. Her chest rises and falls, her jaw tightens. Her face shifts closer to her fathers side.

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Not because you still have much to learn, but because every day with you was one of joy, contentment and love.
(MORE)

ELSA YOUNG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And though I leave you today, remember I will always be with you on your journey. Be strong and resolute. I love you always, Eleanor.

The rope snaps taut, around Elsa's neck. John Young grits his teeth. Eleanor Young closes her eyes slowly. When she finally opens them again, she looks to the sky above. Looming on the horizon are dark black storm clouds.

4 **INT. OAKFIELD MUSEUM - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 4

Connie walks towards the security check at the front of the museum. She places her belongings in a plastic container and walks through the scanner. JIMMY -- mid 20s, tall, athletic, jovial -- the security greets her.

JIMMY
Well, this is a first?

CONNIE
(points)
What do you mean? It didn't go off? The thingy, the alarm.

JIMMY
Oh, not that. You coming in here without a cup of coffee in your hand. That's the real alarm. Late night last night?

CONNIE
Oh, man.

JIMMY
Get your head in the game, girl! What is up with you?

CONNIE
You know what this means?

JIMMY
Mhm.

CONNIE
Now I have to get coffee from the cafeteria.

JIMMY
Mhm.

CONNIE
Cafeteria coffee sucks, Jimmy.

JIMMY
You don't have to tell me that.

Jimmy gathers up Connie's bag from the far end of the security check and hands it to her.

Jimmy raises a flask that he keeps at his post. Connie smiles and sighs then makes her way into the building. As she crosses the floor heading towards a sign that reads CAFETERIA, she is intercepted by a smiling young man, REX BOLANDER -- mid to late twenties, tall, neat haircut, eager --, he has a gym bag slung over his shoulder.

REX BOLANDER
Hey, Connie. How are you doing? All set and ready to go for the week?

Connie isn't as pleased to see Rex as he is to see her.

CONNIE
Hey, Rex. I'm fine, just trying to get myself set up for the day. I'm going to grab a coffee and get to it.

REX BOLANDER
I was out up at the lake with the guys for the weekend. Had some beers, hit some bars, got some sun. The weather was awesome, right?

Connie shifts awkwardly in place, eyes the cafeteria behind Rex and answers weakly. She clearly didn't go out at the weekend.

CONNIE
Yeah, totally awesome. I'm just going to grab a...

REX BOLANDER
I was thinking of going to catch a Cubs game this week. They have a home stretch.

CONNIE
Right, yeah. That's nice. I hope they win.

Connie squirms a little as she presses her foot down on the floor. Her waterlogged foot leaves a small trace of water on the floor.

REX BOLANDER
Wait, what happened there?

CONNIE
Just Monday morning stuff. It's not a big deal. I need to...

Rex begins to dig inside his gym bag. He produces a pair of white gym socks, fresh in the packet.

REX BOLANDER
Take these. You can't be walking around with wet feet all day. Wet foot. You know what I mean.

CONNIE
There's no need Rex, honestly.

REX BOLANDER
No, please, take them. I've always got spares. The pack isn't open or anything. You can check.

Rex shoves them into Connie's hand. She looks down and inspects her wet foot. A change of socks might be nice.

CONNIE
I don't want to put you out, they were probably expensive.

REX BOLANDER
Don't sweat it, I'm glad to help. Maybe we could grab a coffee together, though?

At that instant, TAMARA VELA -- mid thirties, auburn hair, short, expressive features -- abruptly enters the conversation. She points at the socks in Connie's hand.

TAMARA
Wow, Rex, thank you. So gentlemanly. That's really sweet of you.

REX BOLANDER
Oh, hi, Tammy.

TAMARA
I'm going to need to grab Connie, though. It's super important. I need help with a big donor. We've got to get on the case right away. Thanks so much, though, Rex. Have a good day.

Tamara puts her hand around Connie's shoulder and starts to usher her away, out of earshot from Rex. As the pair depart, Rex managers an awkward wave.

REX BOLANDER
Uh, bye. Bye, Connie!

Tamara and Connie make their way towards a bank of elevators. Tamara gives Connie a look. Connie rolls her eyes in return.

TAMARA
I'm telling you, that boy is in love with you.

CONNIE
Give me a break, it's too early! This day has been long enough already. Look.

Connie nods her head towards her empty right hand.

TAMARA
The gym socks?

CONNIE
Other hand, genius.

TAMARA
There isn't anything in your other hand.

CONNIE
Exactly. I didn't get my coffee from Buckley's and now I didn't even get my terrible canteen coffee. I'm starting to dehydrate, I swear.

TAMARA
Come by office and I'll make you whatever you like. I got myself a fancy new machine.

CONNIE
Oh, look at you. A promotion is one thing, but getting hooked up with a coffee machine. Damn, the man really has his hooks in you now.

TAMARA
Excuse you. I do what I do, and I do it better than anyone else. That's why they got me a coffee machine.
(MORE)

TAMARA (CONT'D)
It's not just coffee, though. Tea. Hot chocolate. Anything I want. It came with about three million different pods. I'll hook you up.

The pair sit across from each other in Tamara's office. A red cup sit on Tamara's desk, steam pours out over the edge. Tamara cradles a large mug in her hand. Connie is doing up her black boots after donning her new white socks. She inspects them warily

CONNIE
I probably shouldn't have taken them off of him. I don't want to encourage him.

Tamara is busily sipping on her drink. She closes her eyes and inhales as she takes a sip. She is clearly enjoy the fruits of her labour. After a second, she returns to the conversation.

TAMARA
Who? Rex. Oh, don't worry about him. He's harmless. Just don't agree to go anywhere with him, or do anything with him.

CONNIE
You might be the only friend I have who encourages me to go out less.

TAMARA
First off, that's not what I said. Second, you do you. In, out, whatever makes you happy. I'm taking it you didn't make it out at the weekend?

CONNIE
No, Tammy, I did not.

TAMARA
Gilmore Girls and large Hawaiian pizza?

CONNIE
No...
(pulls a face)
... I watched a Tarentino marathon and ordered Thai.

TAMARA
It's good to change it up every once in a while.

Connie pulls a face as she looks at the socks yet again. She gives a sort of curtsey towards Tamara.

CONNIE
I'm not sure the white socks fit the aesthetic.

TAMARA
I'm sure Rex would disagree. I bet he'd love to see you in your preppy, little gym socks.

CONNIE
Knock it off, I haven't had my coffee yet. I'm far too delicate for your bullshit at this hour.

Connie sits upright in her chair and reaches out for the mug. She presses it to her lips and makes a satisfied sound as she takes a sip.

TAMARA
Are you okay, Connie?

CONNIE
Much better after that. They really did spring for the good stuff, huh?

TAMARA
(gesturing)
No, Connie, your head.

A small drop of blood is trickling down Connie's forehead. She puts her hand to her scalp and lets out a small yelp of pain. Tamara begins to fish out a tissue from a drawer in her desk.

CONNIE
What the hell?

TAMARA
Did you hit it? Are you feeling light headed?

CONNIE
No. I didn't hit it...
(lost in thought)
... the old lady.

TAMARA
Who?

CONNIE
The old lady. I was at a junction and a guy nearly hit me and this old lady.

TAMARA
Did you fall down and hit your head? I'm going to call for a doctor.

Tamara hands a tissue across to Connie.

CONNIE
No, neither of us fell. It was after, fixing my hair...
(thinking hard)
... that is so weird.

TAMARA
Okay, you aren't making much sense. You're going to have to tell me what happened before I'm going to let you walk out of this office.

5 **INT. RYAN'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 5

RYAN BRADFORD -- fortyish, middle management look -- stands behind his desk; across it lays a pile of papers. Some images relate to colonial times, and there are a couple of pictures/notes relating to the Salem Witch Trials. A knock comes to the door.

RYAN BRADFORD
Come in. Ah, Connie, good to see you. I hope your weekend was good.

Connie raises an eyebrow as she enters. Why is this guy in a good mood?

CONNIE
Hi, Ryan. Marcy said you wanted to see me. If it's about the Egyptian collection, that's well into the process. It will all be done way before the deadline.

RYAN BRADFORD
What? Oh, no, that's all great, Connie. Just great. I hear it's coming along wonderfully.

Connie casts her eye down to the array of papers on the desk and sees they are nothing to do with Egypt.

CONNIE
Okay, great. That's good to hear.

Ryan looks at Connie, sweeps his hand above the gathered materials and then spins a picture around.

RYAN BRADFORD
What do you think?

CONNIE
What do I think about...?

RYAN BRADFORD
All this. Salem. Witch trials. Americana. History. Fascinating, I'd say.

CONNIE
I can't say that I know much about it. I went to see The Crucible at the Paramount once, but that's about it.

RYAN BRADFORD
I haven't seen it. Is that the one with Johnny Depp in it?

CONNIE
No, I don't think so.

RYAN BRADFORD
Anyway, take a look. Get familiar with it all. Don't worry; you'll have your own copies. They'll be on your desk by the time you get back to your office.

CONNIE
Familiar?

RYAN BRADFORD
Yes, it's going to be our next big exhibition. We're going to be exploring colonial history. First up, The Salem Witch Trials! Personally, I think it's a great idea.

CONNIE
Okay, but what does it have to do with me?

RYAN BRADFORD
(ignoring Connie)
It came down from on high. A superb idea. I'm sure it'll draw the crowds in.
(points finger upwards)
The decree came from up on high. They know best. Still, I think it's an excellent idea.

CONNIE
And this involves me; how? I've still got a lot to do with the Egyptian exhibition. It's in good shape, but it's not done yet.

RYAN BRADFORD
Rochelle will be finishing that off. You're going to start putting this together.

Connie doesn't do well hiding her ire at the news that Rochelle will be finishing up her current project.

CONNIE
(protesting)
I've been working on the Egyptian project for months. It's taken forever to get everything together.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
The team have busted their asses for this. I've busted my ass.

RYAN BRADFORD
And it's going to be fantastic. I don't doubt it. Rochelle will handle it from here, though.

CONNIE
Rochelle?

Ryan looks up from the desk and musters a serious look for Connie.

RYAN BRADFORD
Yes, Rochelle. That isn't going to be a problem, is it? I really hope it's not because it's already been decided. It came down from upstairs. On high. Those who know better than we do. Rochelle is taking over the Egyptian project.
(MORE)

RYAN BRADFORD (CONT'D)
You get to start working on the Salem Project.

CONNIE
When?

RYAN BRADFORD
Now. Or yesterday, preferably.

CONNIE
Who will I be working with? Everyone is flat out with the other project. It's so close to being done.

RYAN BRADFORD
Yes, and we need all those hard-working employees to stay on course and see it through. So, for now, you'll be working alone.

CONNIE
Alone? I'm supposed to put together an entire exhibition alone?

RYAN BRADFORD
It'll just be for now. We'll get you some resources as soon as we can.

CONNIE
And in the meantime, what am I supposed to do?

Ryan sweeps his hand over the desk again. He gives Connie a shithead grin.

RYAN BRADFORD
Research! It'll all be in your office when you get back.

CONNIE
Back from where?

RYAN BRADFORD
Storage.

CONNIE
Storage?

RYAN BRADFORD
Yes, storage. Apparently, we have some paintings that might be relevant down in storage.

CONNIE
I don't think so. I'm pretty familiar with what we've got in storage.

RYAN BRADFORD
They are in Sub Basement Five, by all accounts.

CONNIE
The dungeon? Great.

RYAN BRADFORD
I'm going to have to ask you to refrain from calling it that. It sets a bad tone and example. I'm going to need you to be professional about this. You've really gotten your head back in the game over the last while. This is a big opportunity for you.

CONNIE
That's what you said about the Egypt project.

RYAN BRADFORD
Exactly! And that led to this opportunity for you. So, make the most of it.

Connie walks into a dimly lit room in a basement area. She flicks on a LIGHT, and the room is illuminated. There are no windows. It's a stark looking place. There are pictures covered in tarp and various boxes around the place.

Connie sighs; she looks wearily at her surroundings and then she starts to uncover some of the stored materials.

CONNIE
(singing under her breath)
In starlit nights, I saw you. So cruelly, you kissed me.

Connie sees a painting stacked towards the back of the room. It is uncovered and shows a panorama of a wooded area. She looks down at her clipboard and makes a face. What is this?

CONNIE (CONT'D)
(singing but slowing down)
Your lips, a magic world. Your sky, all hung with jewels.
(looks at list again)
Huh.

Connie moves closer to the painting. It shows a scene of a man working in a field. In his hand, he holds a small axe and at his feet is some chopped wood. She approaches the painting, but as she does, her vision blurs, and she starts to feel faint.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Connie raises her hand to her hand. A drop of blood runs down her forehead from where her hair had been plucked earlier. She staggers forward and reaches out to brace herself against the painting.

6 **EXT. WOODED AREA - SALEM - DAY** 6

SUPER: **SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS, 1690**

A rugged man, WILMOT PARISH -- thirtyish, handsome, muscular --stands by a gully and mops sweat from his brow. His hat and a small pile of chopped wood in a bushel are on the ground beside him. He cracks his neck and flexes his shoulders.

WILMOT
Home stretch now; come on, boyo.

He picks up a small axe at his feet and begins swinging at the remaining wood pile. After a second, he hears a noise and cocks an eyebrow but keeps swinging the axe. He then hears it again, stops what he is doing and listens intently. He weighs the axe in his hand and straightens his back.

WILMOT (CONT'D)
Come forth if ye would! I will not run. No more!

For a third time, he hears something. Wilmot climbs towards the top of the gully on the far side, axe at the ready. He clenches his jaw as he comes over the rise.

WILMOT (CONT'D)
(gritting teeth, under breath)
Come forth, the reckoning awaits!

As he crests the gully on the far side, he sees the spectral vision of a woman in the near distance. Wilmot cannot fully make her out, but she is dressed in strange dark garb. Her hand reaches out towards him. Wilmot is taken aback at what he sees but does not flee.

WILMOT (CONT'D)
No. It cannot be.

Wilmot hears a voice calling out his name from behind. Someone is approaching the clearing. The voice calling out. belongs to REV JOHN PRESTON -- mid-fifties, friendly look, affable --.

REV JOHN PRESTON
Wilmot? Are you there good fellow?

Wilmot scrambles back across the gully, down to where he had been chopping wood. He occasionally glances back over his shoulder to where the spectral vision is. He pulls a face as Rev Preston calls out again. Not now! Not at this moment!

WILMOT
I am, Reverend. I am here.

Wilmot scrambles back into view as the Reverend walks around a slight bend towards the woodpile.

REV JOHN PRESTON
Ah, there you are. I thought you had come to a mischief. It is unsafe to be out here alone. Not safe, even for a fellow as vital as you, my good friend. Where were you?

WILMOT
I'm safe enough, Reverend. Don't you worry about that.

REV JOHN PRESTON
When I did not see you. Well, I thought something was amiss.

The Reverend looks towards the lip of the far side of the gully. It is elevated about six feet above the side on which the pair stands.

WILMOT
No, Reverend. Nothing to worry us. It has been a long day, and, well, a man must find a moment for relief. It is best to do it out of sight.

Reverend Preston looks at the woodpile and gives a slight nod and a blush.

REV JOHN PRESTON
Yes, forgive me, I did not mean to inquire in such an intrusive manner. I worry for the village folk, that is all. These are dark times, Wilmot. Dark times indeed. The safety of our souls is at stake.

WILMOT
There is nothing for me to forgive, Reverend. To have such a fine and godly man keep me close in his thoughts is always a welcome boon.

The Reverend smiles at the words of kinship and Wilmot begins to gather up the wood he has collected.

REV JOHN PRESTON
Your kind words warm me, Wilmot. I take it you did not see anything untoward while out here?

WILMOT
Just a couple of march hares that would be fit for the pot, could I lay a hand on them. Nought else, though.

REV JOHN PRESTON
I am glad to hear it, but heed me when I tell you this. Stay vigilant. There is dark work abroad. These are not safe times, Wilmot. We must all be watchful, no matter where we are. Dark times, my friend. Dark times.

Wilmot nods solemnly at the Reverend puts his hand on his shoulder.

WILMOT
Let us walk back to the village together. In each others care.

REV JOHN PRESTON
And the care of the Lord above!

WILMOT
Of course, Reverend. He walks with us always. It has been a peaceful day for me. Clear skies and much kindling, from his endless bounty are all I have found.

Reverend Preston smiles at Wilmot for a second. Then his look becomes more pensive. He leans in to Wilmot and and gives him a grave look. Reverend Preston lowers his tone to a whisper.

REV JOHN PRESTON
Praise his glory. We must defend his kingdom, Wilmot. It is why I have come to you. There is witchcraft abroad!

7 **INT. OAKFIELD MUSEUM - THE DUNGEON - DAY** 7

Connie staggers back from the picture. Her head is still swimming. Ringing in her ears are the words of Reverend Preston. " There is witchcraft abroad!".

CONNIE
What the f...

Connie loses her balance and lands on her butt. She sits there for a moment, blinking heavily, trying to clear her head.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Breathe, come on, breathe. It's just a panic attack.

Tamara comes in at that moment and sees Connie on the ground. She rushes forward when she sees her friend in distress.

TAMARA
Connie, jesus! Are you alright? What's the matter?

CONNIE
I'm fine. I just had a little dizzy spell. That's all.

TAMARA
Fine, my ass!

Tamara grabs Connie under both of her arms and helps pick her up from the floor. It is clear that Connie is still dazed. Tamara spots the trickle of blood on her forehead.

CONNIE
You do have a fine ass, Tammy. No arguments here.

TAMARA
Don't get cute with me. I'm serious. This isn't good, Connie. You're bleeding again.
(MORE)

TAMARA (CONT'D)
What's up with that? What did that old lady do to you?

CONNIE
I'm fine. Honestly, I just need to sit down a minute. It's probably just the stale air down here. I don't think anyone's been down here since trucker hats were in fashion.

TAMARA
Okay! Uh huh. You know that they are in fashion again. I know you know, because you saw me wearing one last week. And, don't think I don't know what you're doing. Don't try and change the subject.

Connie looks at Tamara and gives her a weak smile. Tamara is unimpressed.

CONNIE
I don't know. Honestly. I probably just haven't been eating enough. I might be a little run down.

TAMARA
Or, maybe that crazy old bag stuck you with something and drugged you.

CONNIE
Drugged me? I wish old ladies would stop me on the street and give me free drugs. It'd save me going to the dispensary every weekend.

TAMARA
That isn't half as funny as you think it is. You know that, right?

CONNIE
(sadly)
I'm fine, I promise. I even have therapy later. Quite the day for me. From start to finish.

TAMARA
Well, I'm going to take you there.

CONNIE
No, there isn't any need.

TAMARA
It isn't negotiable. I'm taking you.

8 **EXT. PARISH HOUSE, SALEM - CONTINUOUS** 8

Wilmot is tending to a fence post outside of his home. A couple of chickens run by, and he makes a noise at them as they pass. As he works at the post, he hears the sound of hoofs approaching. A fancy looking wagon, pulled by an expensive looking horse, approaches.

WILMOT
Ah, good day to you sir.
(nods/bows head)
Madam.

On the wagon sits HENRY HALLINGHAM -- mid fifties, austere, clearly wealthy, village elder -- and his granddaughter, MABLE HALLINGHAM -- twentyish, attractive, shy --.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
How are you today, good fellow? Hard at work, I see.

WILMOT
There is always work to be done under his bountiful skies. It is but a gift to toil in his name and honour. Yet you know that better than I, Magistrate Hallingham.

Hallingham smiles at the deference Wimot shows him. It betrays the Magistrate's vanity.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
We both do our best to secure God's kingdom on earth, my dear Wilmot.

WILMOT
Indeed, I do what small part I can. But, with my hands, I best serve the Lord in the fields and streams, bending my back. It is best left to those that know better to oversee the colony and keep us on a united path. May the Lord keep us all.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
A fine servant of the Lord, is he not, Mable? As strong in his faith and love for our saviour as he is in sinew and deed

Mable glances at Wilmot sheepishly and mumbles to herself.

HENRY HALLINGHAM (CONT'D)
Speak up, girl. Wilmot cannot hear you.

MABLE
That he is, Grandfather, it is as you say.

Wilmot shifts a little uncomfortably and gives a slight nod of recognition.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
It must be arduous to take care of so much work on behalf of the village and then come home to a house that has not been tended to while you were away.

WILMOT
It is no trouble at all. A hard day's work is its own reward.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
A fine fellow such as yourself deserves at least a warm meal awaiting him on his return to the homestead. Such work as you undertake after your daily labour need not be yours. A man needs a home and a family, Wilmot. It is the natural order of things—a wife to attend to him and his kin. A man needs a family, Wilmot.

WILMOT
I manage it well enough. Just as my sweet Mary taught me.

Mable looks at Wilmot with a sad expression. Magistrate Hallingham does his best to look sympathetic, but something else is at play.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
Mary was a fine and godly woman. How long has it been since her passing?

MABLE
Grandfather!

WILMOT
It has been four years past.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
How quickly the time goes past. There is a season for everything under the heavens, just as the bible tells us: a time to mourn and a time to dance. A man needs a wife, Wilmot. It is only natural. These are unnatural times; we must show unity against those who would overthrow us and drag us into the depths below. There is a natural order to things. We must beware of those who do not follow that righteous path. Don't you agree, Wilmot?

What Magistrate Hallingham is hinting at isn't lost on Wilmot.

WILMOT
Indeed, Magistrate Hallingham. It cannot be any other way.

Magistrate Hallingham smiles broadly. He feels he has won his point.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
We are in agreement, then. It heartens me to hear it, Wilmot. Now, we must be away. Say goodbye to Mr Parish, Mable.

MABLE
(sheepishly)
Goodbye.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
You can manage better than that

WILMOT
(interjecting)
It was a pleasure to see you today, Miss Mable. I shall see you at sermon, no doubt. So I hope you will not take offence if I make my greetings to you.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
Splendid. Splendid indeed. What do you say, Mable?

MABLE
(mumbles)
Of course. That would be nice.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
Forgive the girl, Wilmot. Her lack of talkativeness around men folk is but a sign of her virtue.

WILMOT
It has been nought but a pleasure to see you, Miss Mable and, of course, you good fellow Magistrate. Miss Mable's virtue could never be doubted, and I will hear from any man who says otherwise

Mable blushes deeply, but Magistrate Hallingham is bordering on triumphant.

HENRY HALLINGHAM
Splendid. Splendid indeed. Now, we must be away. I have pressing matters with the elders.

Henry Hallingham spurs his horse onward, and Wilmot watches the wagon roll away. Mable manages a coy look back over her shoulder in Wilmot's direction. Wilmot waits until they have passed and walks back towards his door.

Night falls, and Wilmot is asleep in his chair. A CANDLE burns low on a small table nearby. A board creaks, and Wilmot opens an eye just as a dark shape approaches him. He bolts awake.

9 **INT. THERAPISTS OFFICE - DAY** 9

Connie sits in a LARGE BLACK CHAIR and rocks back and forward. She rubs her thumb on her nose and shrugs.

CONNIE
I mean, you're the expert. You tell me.

Connie's therapist, NANCY VLOZEK -- mid-forties, calm, confident -- shakes her head.

NANCY
Really? Do you want it by the book?

CONNIE
It depends on which book, Nance.

Nancy looks at Connie with the faint trace of a smile. The pair are clearly very comfortable around each other.

NANCY
Nance? You're really on your B game today, aren't you?

CONNIE
B? You're grading me now?

NANCY
No grades, Connie. B is for bullshit.

CONNIE
I don't remember that episode of Sesame Street.

NANCY
(making a note)
That's cute. Let's make it a B plus, in that case.

CONNIE
(looking at the notepad)
What do you want me to tell you?

NANCY
Anything you feel like. You don't have to tell me anything.

CONNIE
Oh, and I'm the one who is on their bullshit today?

Nancy smiles and places her notepad in her lap.

NANCY
By the book, then, huh? The book says that a recurring nightmare of being enclosed or trapped relates to frustration in your professional life.

CONNIE
Wow! Really? I hope they didn't charge you too much for that book because that is some pretty obvious stuff right there. Wow. I mean, water is wet and the sky is blue, right?

NANCY
I didn't say that's what I thought. I just said that's what the book says. You asked for the *expert* view.

Connie smiles at Nancy and then swivels her chair a little. She looks up at a print on the wall. It's new (Chagall - At Night). Connie wags a finger in its direction.

CONNIE
That's new. Chagall, right?

NANCY
It is. Good eye.

CONNIE
Why, thank you kindly, ma'am. I do know a thing or two about some things.

NANCY
Do you like it?

CONNIE
Sure. A flying goat. A two-headed chicken man and a couple in the corner. What's not to love?

NANCY
So, you think they are a couple?

CONNIE
(mock exasperation)
What is this, an elaborate Rorschach Test?

NANCY
It might be. Maybe more so if you think they are a couple.

CONNIE
A couple of people. A pair. A duo. Two. Dos. Deux. Zwei. Not a *couple*, couple.

NANCY
Another interpretation says your dreams could be seen as a desire for a new relationship.

Connie's mood and body language shifts immediately. This is not comfortable territory for her.

CONNIE
A new relationship. That's the only new thing I could want?

NANCY
No, not at all. A new job, new opportunities. A new path. It could be a lot of things.

CONNIE
So, why did you pick a relationship, then?

NANCY
(smiling)
Mainly because you see a couple boning. You failed the Rorschach.

Connie's mood lightens a little as Nancy's remark disarms her.

CONNIE
Luckily, I like you, or else I might take that personally.

NANCY
I like you too, Connie. I really do. So, if you could cut the bullshit and allow me to help you a little, that would be great.

CONNIE
(mock indignation)
Wow. Are you even allowed to say that to me?

NANCY
Which part?

CONNIE
The liking me? The bullshit? I don't know.

NANCY
Yeah, I can pretty much say whatever I want.

CONNIE
I'm not sure that's how this works.

NANCY
(not allowing Connie a beat)
Have you thought about dating again? At all. Even a little. Without a big commitment, I mean.

CONNIE
(sullen)
No.

NANCY
I know how hard it's been for you these last few years.

NANCY (CONT'D)
You're allowed to think about stuff like that, though. It's all normal and natural. I know since Sam...

CONNIE
I don't want to talk about Sam today.

NANCY
That's fine; we don't have to talk about Sam. Have you given any thought to dating or anything like it?

CONNIE
No, and I don't want to talk about it.

NANCY
(a look of concession)
That's no problem at all. Why don't you tell me about this new work project?

10 **INT. CONNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS** 10

Connie swings open the door of her apartment and flicks on a light. In her hand is a BAG OF TAKEOUT. She wearily treads to the middle of the room and plants the bag on the middle of a table in front of her couch.

CONNIE
Junie? Junie, are you there?

A black cat, JUNIPER, hurries into the room and sniffs at the bag on the table. Connie sinks back into the couch and kicks off her shoes. She looks at the white socks she's wearing, shakes her head and peels them off too.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Come on, Junie. At least you can pretend to be happy to see me for reasons other than food.

The cat abandons the bag of food, jumps onto the arm of the couch and rubs her face against Connie's arm. Connie smiles and shuts her eyes. She scratches the cat's head.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I'm happy to see you too, Juniper. It's been a long ass day.

Connie puffs out her cheeks, and her head lolls back a little. Then, finally, she summons up some strength and pushes herself off the sofa, grabbing the bag as she goes.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Let's go, Junie; time to eat.

Connie goes to the kitchen and places the bag on the countertop. Juniper circles at her feet beneath her, eyeing a cabinet beside Connie.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
You have more restraint than I do; I'll give you that.

Connie reaches into the draw, produces some cat food and scoops it into a bowl that she lays at Juniper's feet. She then places her cell phone on the countertop, hits the speaker and plays back a voicemail.

TAMARA (O.S.)
Hey there, I hope you got home okay. Sorry I couldn't stick around to take you back. I had to come back to the office, as usual. They work me hard for my fancy-ass coffee machine. So don't get too jealous. Anyway, if you can text me to let me know you're okay, please do. I'm worried about that bump on your head. Okay, let me know how you're doing. Love ya. Bye.

The phone beeps, and another message plays. Connie has made her way out of the kitchen and into her bedroom. When she returns, she wears an oversized t-shirt and silk pyjamas leggings. Her hair is up in a bun.

MARIA (O.S.)
Hey, Pippy, what's up? I'm just checking in on you. I hope everything went well today. We didn't get to talk long this morning. I miss your dumb face.
(MORE)

MARIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Make sure you call me soon, you hear me? Okay, love you lots. Talk soon.

Connie smiles and taps on the phone to shut it off. She takes out some boxes of Chinese food from the bag and dumps them into a bowl in front of her. Juniper meows at her feet.

CONNIE
What? It goes sticky rice, dumplings, and then sweet and sour sauce on top. Don't judge me! You know all this by now.

Connie grabs a beer from the fridge, scoops up the plate in the other hand and heads towards her living room. She places the plate down in front of her and grabs the remote. She sighs with relief as the T.V. flashes to life. Home is a safe and happy place.

Connie's plate is empty, and the beer bottle is almost empty—an advert for a documentary about colonial art flashes across the screen. Connie pulls a face and picks up her phone. She searches for the painting she found at the museum but comes up empty.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Well, shit. That didn't work. Alright, enough for one day. Let's go, Junie.

She drains the last sip from her bottle, takes it and the plate to the kitchen, turns off the lights and heads to bed. Juniper curls up at the end of her bed as she does.

11 **INT. WILMOT PARISH'S CABIN - NIGHT** 11

Wilmot is jolted awake, and a WOMAN -- mid-thirties, dirty blonde hair, stands before him. Wilmot takes a long, deep breath and rises from his chair. He blinks the sleep out of his eyes as best he can.

WILMOT
Good lord, woman. You frightened me half to death. How did you get in here without me hearing?

WOMAN
(laughing)
The lord can't help you now, Mister Parish, and well, you know it.

Wilmot nervously glances towards the door of the cabin. He then looks at the woman and shakes his head.

WILMOT
It is no laughing matter. None of it.

WOMAN
You don't always snore so loudly, Wilmot, but I've no doubt all that racket drowned out me coming in unannounced.

WILMOT
Be serious; did anyone see you?

WOMAN
Yes, I came here by torchlight, whistling a merry tune all the way. It drew quite the crowd on the road.

WILMOT
(shaking head)
You best be careful. Magistrate Hallingham was here earlier again today.

WOMAN
Oh, I don't doubt he was. He has been haunting your door for this past while. Still trying to marry you off to young Mercy, is he?

WILMOT
Mable. Her name is Mable. It is getting a sight harder to ward off his entreaties. It doesn't look right, and this is not the time to stand out.

WOMAN
(somewhat tetchy)
Mable, is it? I see. You'll be wed by next spring, I'm sure. That's if we all live to see another spring. It's far worse than standing out that you should worry about. Lest you forget, it was you that summoned me here. You left the axe against the willow stump.

WILMOT
I know well what I did and had good reason to do it. I don't call you here lightly. It is a danger for us both. I saw something today in the woods. I find it hard to explain what it was. A vision, perhaps. Yet, nay, it was not that. A spectre? It could be so, but all too tangible. Dressed in dark clothing, singing a song.

The woman changes her demeanour and stares intently at Wilmot.

WOMAN
Where was this?

WILMOT
In the clearing by the thicket where I collect firewood. She was on the far side of the gully.

WOMAN
Are you sure it was a woman?

WILMOT
I do not doubt it. No doubt at all. It was a woman.

WOMAN
Did you recognise the song she sang?

WILMOT
It was a foreign sound, though not unpleasant. Her voice was clear and true. The words, though, they confuse me. It spoke of cruel kisses under starlight and a magic world. As best I could make out.

WOMAN
I see. And then what?

WILMOT
(puzzled)
And then what?

WOMAN
(patiently)
What did she do next, Wilmot? After the song

WILMOT
It did not get any further. The Reverend Preston stumbled across my path. I did my best to hide her from his view. But, had he seen her, we know how that might have gone for both her and me.

WOMAN
Of course, he fucking did. You didn't get to converse with the vision, then?

WILMOT
I did not. Perhaps it's for the best she was gone so fleetingly. She looked like the very picture of a witch. Dark garb and strange words.

WOMAN
Was she old and withered, like a spiteful old crone? Did you recognise her?

WILMOT
No, she was not, far from it. She was youthful and comely. Bewildered, perhaps, but not old or withered.

WOMAN
Two comely maidens searching you out in one day. Did you recognise this one?

WILMOT
No, well. No. Well. Perhaps. How shall I put it?

WOMAN
Make sense, man, or I'll knock some into your head. It is not the time to babble.

WILMOT
She looked very much like you, Eleanor. Believe me; I would not jest ye in this time.

The woman that has come to see Wilmot is Eleanor Young.

ELEANOR
A comely witch that looks as I do? Wilmot, you are a pretty lad, though you do not have the wits to match. If this is a ruse to get me to your door, I may beat you senseless. You do not have to marry the Hallingham child. Just be brave enough to tell that blowhard, Henry.

WILMOT
Eleanor, be serious! She was not the same as thee but so very much like you. She could have been your kin. I swear it. She was there only a moment, but I could still see her face plain as day.

ELEANOR
Tell me again what she sang of.

The pair sit together beside the candlelight, and Wilmot recounts his tale. The candle burns lower, and the two cease talking. Eleanor has a serious look on her face.

WILMOT
What do you think it means?

ELEANOR
I do not know, Wilmot. I will have to go and speak of it with the others. Samoset might be able to decipher more than I can from what you have said.

Eleanor stands up and straightens out her clothing. Wilmot reaches out a hand for her.

WILMOT
You cannot leave now. It is not safe out there. That much we know.

ELEANOR
I cannot be here when the morning finds us. I could be seen, which would go worse for you than being caught with a spectral vision. Those who think they wield power here have already cast judgment on me. A wanton harlot who preys upon good men of the settlement in the night, that's what they'd say.

WILMOT
Let them say it. Stay with me; I'll beat the dawn and have you away and safe before the first light.

ELEANOR
You are a fool, Wilmot. Do you know that?

WILMOT
Mayhaps. There is no such fool as a fool in love, though

ELEANOR
I wish you wouldn't say such things. It will be the end of you.

Wilmot pulls Eleanor close to him.

WILMOT
Stay, please. I'm fool enough to beg.

Eleanor exhales deeply and presses her face into Wilmot's chest for a second.

ELEANOR
Understand I need to be far away before the light creeps in?

WILMOT
(smiling)
Yes, my love. I promise.

INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT/EXT. SALEM BARN - DAY - INTERCUT

Connie is disturbed in her sleep. She wriggles from side to side before raising her hands to her eyes. She begins to rub at them.

She blinks her eyes open and see's she is in a barn, surrounded by bales of hay. A look of panic crosses her face. Then, looking down, she sees she is dressed in seventeenth-century colonial garb. She tries to stand up, but her hands are in shackles behind her back. Connie tries to open her mouth to scream, but nothing comes out.

A man dressed as a Revered enters the room. He holds a bible in his hand, and is trailed by two soldiers.

REV SMYTHE
You have been condemned as a witch, and your life will be forfeit this day. Your wickedness and evil-doing on behalf of the kingdom of evil cannot be undone. Yet there is still a chance to repent, and hope that you can find a path to the Lord's grace by confessing your unholy sins. It is your final chance, Elsa. Confess. Unburden yourself. Give your husband and child that much, at least. Repent ye, sinner! You are about to go and face your Lord and maker. It is your final chance!

Connie cannot make sense of what is going on. She tries to struggle and scream, but she cannot move or speak.

REV SMYTHE (CONT'D)
Very well, you will die as sinfully as you have lived. Take her!

Two redcoats approach and grab Connie. One begins to drag her to her feet while the other tries to place a sackcloth over her head. As she is hauled to her feet, she grazes her head against a lamp hanging in the barn. A small trickle of blood runs out from precisely the same place as when Connie encountered the old woman on the street.

The two soldiers lead Connie forward. She struggles to breathe under the sackcloth. All she can see of the world is under her feet. The barn door opens, and natural light perforates the bag on her head. Straw and mud are replaced by grass under her feet—a droplet of blood streaks down her cheek.

Connie hears the harsh voice of another man from behind her.

FACELESS MAN
Take it off. Let them see what becomes of witches. Let them know what their perfidy will sew!

The bag is removed from her head, and Connie sucks in a deep breath.

FACELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Wipe the blood from her, you fools. You would have us look like savages, parading a beaten woman before the Lord's flock.

Connie tries to look around but is nudged forward, around a corner and into a clearing. A group of people has gathered around and look at Connie with disdain and fear. Connie's ears begin to ring, and the Reverend's words are muffled. She looks out into the crowd as she is led up the steps. Connie finds the faces of a man and his child. They stand side-by-side. Their faces offer the only sympathy from within the gathered crowd. Connie then glances up to see the gallows before her.

13 **EXT. WILMOT PARISH'S CABIN - PRE-DAWN - CONTINUOUS** 13

Wilmot and Eleanor make their way out into the cold morning air. Their breath rises before them. Wilmot leads Eleanor as they wordlessly make their way from his home. Finally, after passing through rough terrain, they reach the edge of a dense forest.

WILMOT
It is always a sorrow to see you leave.

Eleanor looks at Wilmot. It is a look of kindness and patience reserved for someone who doesn't fully understand the situation.

ELEANOR
We will see each other soon enough, I expect. Be careful, though. I made some jest last night, but you stay sharp around Hallingham and the like. This place is a pit of vipers, even without the darkness that surrounds us.

WILMOT
(smiling)
I'll manage just fine with them. I know what they like to hear and how to handle them.

Eleanor gives Wilmot the look again.

ELEANOR
Indeed. Now, listen to me well. If you are to see the vision again, you must try to contact her. I know it is an unnerving proposition, but

WILMOT
(interrupting)
I was trying to make contact until the Reverend Preston showed up!

WILMOT (CONT'D)
It takes more than that to unman me. Especially after what I've seen.

ELEANOR
(nod solemnly)
If you see her again, you leave the signal out, and I will come. And, if not I, then another of us. Do you understand?

WILMOT
That I do, now away, lest you be seen; I don't want you in harm's way.

ELEANOR
You are a fool, Wilmot Parish.

Eleanor kisses him on the cheek and makes her way into the forest.

EXT. SALEM BARN - DAY/INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Connie is in a blind panic. She becomes weightless as the two soldiers lift her onto a barrel. She looks back at the father and daughter. Then, seeing the pain etched on their faces, she decides to fix her gaze on the horizon. The clear day that surrounds the gathering begins to darken. A fiery red glow is evident in the distance. The sky turns black. None of the gathered villagers reacts in any way. They cannot see what Connie sees.

A soldier pushes the barrel away. The sound of a rope snapping taut.

Connie bolts upright in her bed. She is drenched in sweat and panting.

CONNIE
They're coming. Don't you see! They are coming for us all.

Connie paws wildly at her neck, searching for the rope that sent her to her death. Instead, she finds nothing but the slick mass of sweat. Her breathing begins to slow.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Get it together. It's just a dream.

Then a trickle of blood rolls down her cheek, just like in her dream. Connie puts her hand to her head.

She takes her hand away and sees blood. Then reaches back for something else. She inspects what is in her hand. It is a bloody piece of straw.